

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 are pending in the present application.

In the Restriction Requirement, the Examiner asserted that the application contains inventions which are not so linked as to form a general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1, and required Applicants to elect, for examination, one of Group I, comprising claims 1 and 2, and Group II, comprising claim 3.

Applicants have elected Group I, comprising claims 1 and 2. However, the election is made with traverse for at least the following reasons.

In the Restriction Requirement, the Examiner asserted that the inventions of Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept because they lack the same or corresponding special technical features. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Applicants' independent claim 1 recites a tool exchange device which includes, inter alia, "step portions with an L-shaped section having vertical restriction surfaces diametrically opposing and parallel to each other and horizontal engagement surfaces directed radially outwardly from the lower ends on both sides of a main body portion of a tool". Applicants' independent claim 3 recites a tool including a grip portion to be gripped by a head at the top of a main body portion, where notches "having step portions with an L-shaped section are provided at both sides of the main body portion, the step portions include vertical restriction surfaces diametrically opposing and parallel to each other, and horizontal engagement surfaces directed radially outwardly are provided at the lower ends of the vertical restriction surfaces". Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 and 3 recite a common special technical feature: a main body portion of a tool which includes the claimed step portions having vertical restriction surfaces and horizontal

engagement surfaces. Applicants respectfully submit that this feature defines a contribution which the inventions of Group I and II make over the prior art.

M.P.E.P. §1893.03(d) specifies that a group of inventions will be considered to be linked to form a single inventive concept where there is a technical relationship among the inventions that involves at least one common corresponding special technical feature. In this regard, as noted above, claims 1 and 2 are elected. Thus, should the restriction requirement be maintained, claim 3 will be withdrawn. However, Applicants submit that withdrawn claim 3 is directed to at least one common corresponding special technical feature, as discussed above.

In view of the above, Applicants submit that all the claims in the application are linked to form a single inventive concept, and thus, all the claims should be examined. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the restriction requirement and examine all the pending claims.

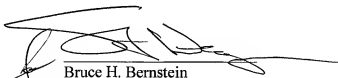
Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the inventions of Groups I and II relate to a single inventive concept, and submit that the Restriction Requirement is improper.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the Restriction Requirement, and consider all of the claims pending the present application.

Nevertheless, in order to be fully responsive, Applicants have elected with traverse Group I, comprising claim 1 and 2, in the event that the Examiner chooses not to reconsider and withdraw the Restriction Requirement.

Should there be any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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